

# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

## CHAMPAGNE



© Gail Skoff

## 2013

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# J. LASSALLE

by *Daniel Brunier*

**I** FIRST TASTED the J. Lassalle Champagnes during a KLWM tasting in San Francisco. For me, the unifying character of the Lassalle wines is their backbone and purity. Depending on whether we are discussing the *Préférence*, *Spécial Club*, or *Cuvée Angéline*, we are of course talking about varying levels of finesse and depth, yet each expresses the house style: straightforward in both aroma and structure.

I've since had a number of occasions to ruminate on the different cuvées, and I must admit that each one seduces me with its unique personality. The freshness and sparkle of the *Préférence*, demonstrating the side of Champagne that gives immediate pleasure, is simple, honest, and direct. The structure and minerality of the 2004 *Spécial Club* gives a more serious, more reserved, more complex wine of great length. The grand finesse and elegance of the *Cuvée Angéline*—which after a few years of aging is velvety, delicate, and deep—make it apt to accompany any meal. It is noticeably mineral but never severely so. I remember being moved by a 2005.

I realize now that it took me a while to wholly embrace all the J. Lassalle wines, for which the word “brut” is not a vain description. As with many wines with a pronounced personality and strong character, the tasting process has several phases: analysis, surprise, contemplation, connection, and, finally, admiration.



*Four generations of Lassalles*

© Michel Boudot

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NV PRÉFÉRENCE BRUT *PREMIER CRU*  
NV BRUT ROSÉ *PREMIER CRU*  
2005 BLANC DE BLANCS BRUT *PREMIER CRU*  
2008 “CUVÉE ANGÉLINE” BRUT *PREMIER CRU*  
2006 SPÉCIAL CLUB BRUT *PREMIER CRU*

*Please inquire about availability of tenths, magnums, and jeroboams.*



## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING (A GOOD BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE)

*by Lyle Railsback*

**A**T A RECENT PARTY I had the opportunity to taste a famous bottle of Champagne that bears an even more famous marigold-colored label. While it is an almost ubiquitous name brand that we commonly warn our customers against, it had been a while since I'd tasted a bottle. What a dud. No technical flaws, just boring—like a beautiful woman everyone wants to talk to, but who can't hold a conversation.

Things changed when I opened a bottle of the Lassalles' *Préférence*. I saw the light, so to speak. The *Préférence* is the wine they consider to be their basic *cuvée*, but very little is “basic” about it. We were assailed by the aroma of limestone from this perfect blend of Meunier, Pinot Noir, and Chardonnay that is aged on the lees for forty-eight months. A lot of “grower” Champagne is being imported these days, but the difference lies in who is doing the growing, and Lassalle has it down. Taste for yourself.

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